

Washington, DC - Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA), Co-Chair of the Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus, introduced legislation that will honor those who have died on the job and draw attention to the need for better enforcement of workplace health and safety laws. Sánchez, along with Reps. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) and Bruce Braley (D-IA), introduced the Workers' Memorial Day resolution today in Congress.

"Every day, working people across California put their lives on the line," said Rep. Linda Sánchez. "Yet sadly, more than 5,000 Americans are killed each year due to workplace related injuries, and millions more experience occupational injuries and illnesses."

Today, Tuesday, April 28th, millions of workers worldwide will recognize Workers' Memorial Day in order to commemorate those who have been injured or killed on the job, and to remind us of the need to strive for better worker safety and health protections.

It is estimated that 16 workers die every day in the U.S., many in the southern California region. On-the-job deaths occur not only in professions seen as dangerous, like law enforcement or firefighting--those killed are also mechanics, store clerks, bus drivers, and landscapers. Earlier this month, a 38-year-old construction worker was killed in the southern Los Angeles area when a garage collapsed on him while he worked on a remodeling project.

International numbers are even more staggering. Despite vast underreporting, it is estimated that more than 2 million workers die each year of work-related accidents and diseases world-wide. That means that more people are killed due to workplace injuries and illnesses than are killed in war.

"Workers' Memorial Day is a reminder that each death is a life cut short - a worker who left behind a family and friends," continued Sánchez. "I encourage everyone to take a moment to recognize the needless sacrifice that they and their families made this year and in years past. Workers Memorial Day is a reminder that we can do better."

Rep. Sánchez also co-sponsored the Corporate Injury, Illness, and Fatality Reporting Act of 2009 (H.R. 2113), which would require large multi-site companies to regularly report to the Department of Labor on workplace safety, health, and on the numbers and rates of work-related deaths, injuries, and illnesses at all of their worksites. Currently, the DOL gets this information largely from individual establishments, but never has the full picture of the entire corporate structure of a company. This bill would for the first time mandate that all injuries are reported.